

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SW, MY
SUBJECT: GOS TO PROVIDE PATROL BOATS AND TRAINING TO MALAYSIAN
NAVY

1. A SHORT BUT INTERESTING DEBATE ON SWEDISH ARMS EXPORT
POLICY WAS PLAYED OUT IN THE SWEDISH PARLIAMENT ON MARCH 18
WHEN COMMERCE MINISTER BURENSTAM-LINDER DEFENDED A
GOVERNMENT DECISION LAST NOVEMBER TO SELL FOUR MODERN
SPICA-CLASS PATROL BOATS TO THE MALAYSIAN NAVY AND
TO TRAIN APPROXIMATELY 200 MALAYSIAN OFFICERS AND CREW IN
SWEDEN TO OPERATE THE BOATS. EARLIER THIS MONTH, A
COMMUNIST MEMBER OF THE TIKSDAG, OSWALD SODERKVIST, HAD DIRECTED
AN INTERPELLATION TO THE GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT
SALE OF THE BOATS AS A VIOLATION OF SWEDISH REGULATIONS
GOVERNING ARMS EXPORTS. THE BOATS ARE TO BE BUILT IN THE
KARLSKRONA SHIPYARDS AT A COST OF 240 MILLION KRONOR
AND DELIVERED BY JULY 1979 AT THE LATEST. THE TRAINING
IS BELIEVED TO HAVE ALREADY COMMENCED.

2. ALL SWEDISH ARMS EXPORTS EXCEPT THOSE TO OTHER NORDIC

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COUNTRIES AND "THE NEUTRAL STATES OF EUROPE" MUST BE
LICENSED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND CAN BE SOLD ONLY TO OTHER
GOVERNMENTS. LICENSES ARE NOT ISSUED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH
REGULATIONS APPROVED BY THE RIKSDAG IN 1971, FOR EXPORTS
TO COUNTRIES "PRESENTLY ENGAGED IN CONFLICT WITH OTHER
COUNTRIES," ENGAGED IN "INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS WHICH MAY
LEAD TO ARMED CONFLICTS," "WHERE THERE IS INTERNAL ARMED

UNREST," OR "WHICH, IT IS ASSUMED, WILL USE THE MATERIEL TO REPRESS HUMAN RIGHTS AS DEFINED IN UN STATUTES."

3. IN PROTESTING THE SALE TO MALAYSIA, SODERKVIST HAD IMPLIED THAT THE "ARMED GUERRILLA MOVEMENT" AGAINST THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTED A STATE OF CIVIL WAR IN THAT COUNTRY, AND THUS THE SUPPLY OF PATROL BOATS AND TRAINING BY SWEDEN SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS A VIOLATION OF THESE REGULATIONS.

4. BURENSTAM-LINDER, IN HIS REPLY, DENIED ANY VIOLATION OF SWEDISH REGULATIONS, STATING THAT THE "FEW REMAINING ARMED AND RIVAL GROUPS" IN MALAYSIA COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED TO CONSTITUTE "GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES." AS FAR AS GOS IS CONCERNED, HE SAID, THERE IS NO QUESTION OF A CIVIL WAR TAKING PLACE IN MALAYSIA. HE ADDED THAT THE BOATS WILL BE USED IN MALAYSIA'S ANTI-SMUGGLING EFFORTS, PARTICULARLY AGAINST NARCOTICS SMUGGLING AND PIRATE ACTIVITY ALONG THE LONG MALAYSIAN COAST, AND CONCLUDED THAT THE GOS WAS NOT PREPARED TO RECONSIDER THE SALE.

5. IN A SUBSEQUENT INTERPELLATION, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MP MAI-BRITT THEORIN HAS DEMANDED THAT MINISTER OF DEFENSE ERIK KRONMARK JUSTIFY THE SWEDISH NAVY'S DECISION TO TRAIN 200 MALAYSIAN OFFICERS AND CREW TO OPERATE THE BOATS. SHE CRITICIZED THE DECISION AS "NOT IN ACCORD WITH SWEDISH NEUTRALITY OR SECURITY POLICY OBJECTIVES."

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6. COMMENT: SWEDISH ARMS EXPORT POLICY IS OFTEN SAID TO BE SUFFICIENTLY RESTRICTIVE TO ENSURE THAT COUNTRIES MOST IN NEED OF ARMS WILL NOT RECEIVE THEM, AT LEAST FROM SWEDEN. ANY ATTEMPT TO LIBERALIZE LICENSING PROCEDURES WOULD BE STRONGLY RESISTED IN THE RIKSDAG BY SUCH ANTI-DEFENSE IDEOLOGUES AS THEORIN AND SODERKVIST AND MANY OTHERS AS WELL. WHILE THE NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT ELECTED LAST YEAR HAS NO PRESENT INTENT IN THIS DIRECTION, IT PROBABLY WOULD NOT OBJECT TO INCREASED ARMS SALES TO PRESENT PURCHASERS OR TO AN EXPANSION OF POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS AS LONG AS NEW CUSTOMERS ARE "ELIGIBLE." SWEDISH SHIPYARDS, INCLUDING THE KARLSKRONA YARD WHERE THE BOATS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED, HAVE BEEN HIT PARTICULARLY HARD BY THE CURRENT ECONOMIC DOWNTURN. THE MALAYSIAN ORDER AND SIMILAR ORDERS, THEREFORE, ARE UNDOUBTEDLY MOST WELCOME. DEFENSE MINISTER KRONMARK IS EXPECTED TO JUSTIFY TRAINING FOR THE MALAYSIAN CREWS IN THE RIKSDAG NEXT WEEK AS CONFORMING TO ARMS EXPORT REGULATIONS AND AS A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

TO THE APPROVED BOAT SALE.
SMITH

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